

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY KIGALI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5638

C O N F I D E N T I A L KIGALI 0043

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ASEC, SHUM, ATRN, CPAS, UG

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR DEPT DECISION ON TRAVEL TO UGANDA BY USG EMPLOYEE

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REF KIGALI 1759

1. FSS SECRETARY M. GLORIA WITT, FIANCEE OF MARK ELIAS AT THE TIME OF HIS DISAPPEARANCE, HAS BEEN GATHERING REPORTS FROM A VARIETY OF SOURCES

ON THE FATE OF ELIAS. ON THE BASIS OF HER INFORMATION, SHE IS CONVINCED

THAT ELIAS IS STILL ALIVE, THAT HE IS BEING HELD AT MURCHISON BAY PRISON, AND THAT HE MAY BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL ON ESPIONAGE CHARGES WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS. CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE IS LACKING EITHER TO ESTABLISH THESE POSSIBILITIES AS FACT OR TO PROVE THEM UNFOUNDED.

2. MS. WITT HAS INFORMED ME THAT SHE WOULD LIKE TO MAKE AN EFFORT TO VISIT UGANDA BEFORE DEPARTING THE REGION AT THE END OF HER TOUR IN KIGALI EARLY IN FEBRUARY. SHE WOULD SEEK TO CONTACT UGANDAN AUTHORITIES TO ASCERTAIN THE PRESENT WHEREABOUTS OF MR. ELIAS, IF HE IS STILL ALIVE, AND TO PLEAD FOR HIS RELEASE. SHE WOULD APPLY FOR A VISA AT THE UGANDAN EMBASSY, KIGALI, FLY TO ENTEBBE IF A VISA IS GRANTED, AND ARRANGE TO BE MET AND HOUSED BY THE FRG EMBASSY (OR POSSIBLY BY UNDP PERSONNEL. IN APPLYING FOR A UGANDAN VISA SHE WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

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STATE THAT THE PURPOSE OF THE VISIT IS TO OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT FIANCE

MARK ELIAS (IN ANY CASE, SHE IS ALREADY WELL KNOWN TO UGANDAN EMBASSY HERE).

3. CONSISTENT WITH USG POLICY, DCM AND I HAVE ADVISED MS. WITT NOT RPT NOT TO SEEK TO ENTER UGANDA. WE HAVE REMINDED HER THAT USG

CANNOT PROVIDE FOR HER SAFETY, THAT HER USG EMPLOYMENT MAY MAKE HER DOUBLY SUSPECT IN THE EYES OF UGANDAN AUTHORITIES, THAT HER CONNECTION WITH MARK ELIAS MIGHT BE TAKEN AS CONFIRMATION OF THEIR SUSPICIONS OF HIM, AND THAT PERSONAL DANGER OF HER TRAVELING THERE IS CONSEQUENTLY SUBSTANTIAL. SHE HAS CONSIDERED THESE FACTORS, BUT BELIEVES SHE MUST MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO HELP HER FIANCE, AS LONG AS THERE IS SOME CHANCE THAT HE IS ALIVE. SHE THEREFORE PROPOSES TO APPLY FOR VISITOR'S VISA AT UGANDAN EMBASSY, KIGALI, IF POSSIBLE WITH HER OFFICIAL PASSPORT BUT OTHERWISE WITH SERVICE PASSPORT.

4. WHILE THERE IS NOTHING TO PREVENT MS. WITT, AS PRIVATE CITIZEN BEARING ORDINARY PASSPORT FROM APPLYING FOR VISA TO UGANDA, EXPERIENCE INDICATES THAT SUCH APPLICATION IS LIKELY TO BE TURNED DOWN (OR NEVER ACTED UPON, WHICH AMOUNTS TO THE SAME THING). SHE REQUESTS THAT SHE BE PERMITTED TO APPLY USING HER OFFICIAL PASSPORT, AND WITH NON-SUBSTANTIVE LETTER OF INTRODUCTION FROM THE EMBASSY. EVEN THEN, WE JUDGE CHANCES SLIM THAT VISA WILL BE GRANTED, BUT IT IS LIKELY AT LEAST THAT APPLICATION WOULD BE REFERRED TO KAMPALA AND MIGHT HAVE SOME FAVORABLE EFFECT.

5. UNLESS OTHERWISE INSTRUCTED BY DEPT, EMBASSY WILL NOT RPT NOT ACCEDE TO MS. WITT'S REQUEST EITHER TO PERMIT HER TO USE OFFICIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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PASSPORT FOR THIS PURPOSE OR TO PROVIDE INTRODUCTORY LETTER, AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADVISE HER AGAINST PROPOSED TRAVEL.

6. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF STRONG PERSONAL AND HUMANITARIAN CONSIDERATION IN MS. WITT'S CASE, WE BELIEVE EMBASSY'S POSITION (BASED ON WHAT WE UNDERSTAND TO BE CURRENT DEPT POLICY) DESERVES SERIOUS AND PROMPT REVIEW AT POLICY LEVEL IN WASHINGTON.

7. ACTION REQUESTED: IASK PERSONALLY THAT WASHINGTON REVIEW WITT REQUESTS IN MOST FAVORABLE LIGHT POSSIBLE, TAKING INTO ACCOUNT HER SCHEDULED TRANSFER FROM POST O/A FEB 3, AND PROVIDE INSTRUCTIONS ASAP.
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